

Agenda Item: 1 F -1

Date: 10/18/2012

FRESNO CITY COUNCIL



Supplemental Information Packet

Agenda Related Items – Meeting of October 18, 2012

Supplemental Packet Date: October 17, 2012

Item(s)

Report to Council: Approval of Resolutions Establishing a Fresno Poet Laureate Selection Committee and The Honorary Position of the "Fresno Poet Laureate"

1. **RESOLUTION** - Establishing the Fresno Poet Laureate Selection Committee
2. **RESOLUTION** - Establishing the Honorary Position of Fresno Poet Laureate

Supplemental Information:

Any agenda related public documents received and distributed to a majority of the City Council after the Agenda Packet is printed are included in Supplemental Packets. Supplemental Packets are produced as needed. The Supplemental Packet is available for public inspection in the City Clerk's Office, 2600 Fresno Street, during normal business hours (main location pursuant to the Brown Act, G.C. 54957.5(2)). In addition, Supplemental Packets are available for public review at the City Council meeting in the City Council Chambers, 2600 Fresno Street. Supplemental Packets are also available on-line on the City Clerk's website.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

The meeting room is accessible to the physically disabled, and the services of a translator can be made available. Requests for additional accommodations for the disabled, sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, or translators should be made one week prior to the meeting. Please call City Clerk's Office at 621-7650. Please keep the doorways, aisles and wheelchair seating areas open and accessible. If you need assistance with seating because of a disability, please see Security.



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CITY CLERK, FRESNO CA

October 13, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

I support the petition of Mike Medrano and others for the creation of a Fresno Poet Laureate, and I stand ready to assist them in this worthy endeavor. If you have any questions, please contact me at tskeen@csufresno.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Skeen", is written over a horizontal line.

Timothy Skeen, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of English

Coordinator, MFA Program in Creative Writing

Department of
English
5245 N. Backer Ave.
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Fresno, CA 93740-8001

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Fresno City College

1101 East University Avenue, Fresno, California 93741 Phone: 559-442-8281 FAX: 559-443-8547

Humanities Division

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CITY CLERK, FRESNO CA

October 15, 2012

To Mayor Ashley Swearengin and others whom it may concern:

It is my pleasure to write in full and enthusiastic support of the committee to establish a Poet Laureate position in the city of Fresno. I have authored two books of poetry and have taught at Fresno City College for fifteen years, serving as department chair for four of those years. I can say without equivocation that—as you may know—poetry can improve language and literacy skills, inspire individuals and communities, and bring people together in educational and often transformational ways. When cities and states appoint a poet to serve as its laureate, they recognize and celebrate how poetry can help serve a community, and they realize how the appointee can contribute to the civic and economic fabric of its diverse residents.

As the committee can explain, the United States has a poet laureate, our very own Philip Levine. Many states have a poet laureate as well, and California's current one is our very own Juan Felipe Herrera. I have had the pleasure of giving book signings with many laureates, including Livermore's Connie Post and Modesto's Gillian Wegener. Philadelphia recently appointed its first poet laureate, and I hope that Fresno will become the next city to make this position official, and I applaud the work of the committee to help make it happen. At our recent English department meeting, I asked the faculty to lend their support for this position as well, and they voted unanimously in favor of Fresno establishing a poet laureate position. With your help, we can.

I have lived in Fresno for fifteen years now, and I have had the great pleasure of writing poetry among some of the country's finest writers. I have had worked with youths, seniors, and students of all ages and backgrounds, and I am certain that this committee has everyone in mind as they work to create this position. This is a fine committee with an excellent idea. I proudly endorse it and ask for your support as well. I appreciate the Mayor's time and consideration, and I thank everyone who works to advance our city's well-being.

Sincerely,

Lee Herrick

Professor of English, Author of *This Many Miles from Desire* and *Gardening Secrets of the Dead*

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October 18, 2012

Mayor Ashley Swearengin
2600 Fresno Street
Room 2075
Fresno CA, 93721

Dear Mayor Swearengin,

The Fresno Arts Council is proud to propose the appointment of a Poet Laureate for Fresno. Fresno is recognized throughout the country for its rich history of literary excellence and is home to many world renowned poets. Last year's National Poet Laureate was Pulitzer Prize award winner Philip Levine, Fresno resident and Professor Emeriti of California State University Fresno. This year, California appointed former Fresno County resident and former California State University Professor Juan Felipe Herrera as the state Poet Laureate.

The appointment of a Poet Laureate, would provide an ambassador who would encourage literacy and promote the literary arts in our schools and demonstrate to school children the high value we place on literature and serve to encourage them to strive for excellence as well.

The proposed Poet Laureate Program will celebrate poetry by offering a resident poet the opportunity to make meaningful connections, honor and serve our diverse community, elevate the importance of the art form, and share poetry with residents of Fresno.

Most Sincerely,

Lilia Gonzales Chavez
Lilia Gonzales Chavez,
Executive Director